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# SHOPPER'S GUIDE

## To U. S. Grades for Food



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This is a *Consumer Service* of USDA



# SHOPPER'S GUIDE

## To U. S. Grades for Food

By Eleanor Ferris, Agricultural Marketing Service

Shopping for food today is much more complicated than it used to be. Most grocery stores have a bewildering array of foods; and perhaps you find it difficult to select the particular variety or quality you want.

Your solution may be to buy a particular brand, or a food that carries an official grade mark. The U. S. Department of Agriculture offers a shopper's aid in the form of U. S. grades for consumers. You are probably familiar with some of these grades—U. S. Grade A or AA for eggs, for instance.

This publication contains a list of all consumer grades established by the USDA, along with some U. S. grades that are used in wholesale trading. Consumer grades are designed to be applied to small units of food such as you commonly buy in retail stores—for instance, 1 chicken or 5 pounds of potatoes. The wholesale grades are suited to comparatively large-scale shipments and they allow a certain percentage of tolerance for undergrade specimens. And grades, in general, apply to quality at the time the product was graded.

The grades listed here are the only official grades applied by the Federal Government to the products named. Most U. S. grades for consumers are preceded by the letters "U. S." and are enclosed in a shield-shaped

mark; and most consumer grades except for meats are designated by letters—U. S. Grade A, B, or C.

An explanation of the meaning of each of the Federal grades, and suggestions on suitable uses for some of the foods of different grades, are also included in this pamphlet.

Buying graded foods, of course, does not necessarily imply buying only the best. Grades offer a choice of quality so that you may pick the one most suitable for the use you have in mind, such as top grades of eggs for poaching or frying, lower grades for scrambling or combining with other foods.

The Agricultural Marketing Service is the USDA agency responsible for developing the standards on which these consumer grades—as well as the many grades used in wholesale trading—are based. AMS also provides grading services, many of them in cooperation with State agencies.

The use of U. S. grades for consumers is strictly voluntary. The food processor, handler, or producer, must request grading service, if he wants it, and he must pay a fee for it.

Near the end of this bulletin, you will find a list of a few of the other publications about wholesale and retail grades—some of them going into more detail about particular foods.

## MEATS

Federally graded meat is easy to identify. It bears a grade stamp which consists of a shield enclosing the letters "USDA" and the appropriate grade name, such as Prime, Choice, or Good.

This stamp is registered in the U. S. Patent Office and only an official grader of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is authorized to use it.

Judging the quality of most meats is a very technical job requiring much skill and training. It is almost impossible to judge quality in small retail cuts. That is why the Federal meat grader grades only whole carcasses or wholesale cuts.

The grader uses a roller stamp which leaves a ribbon-like imprint of the grade name and he applies it in such a manner that there will be an imprint of the grade name on practically all of the retail cuts. The stamping is done with a harmless purple vegetable juice which usually disappears in cooking.

Another purple stamp you may see on meat is round in shape and bears the legend "U. S. Insp'd & P'S'D." This is the symbol of Federal meat inspection and assures you that the meat was wholesome at the time it was inspected. Federal inspection is compulsory for meat shipped in interstate or foreign commerce. All meat federally graded must first be inspected for wholesomeness.

### Beef

Six official grades of beef may be found in retail stores. They are USDA Prime, Choice, Good, Standard, Commercial, and Utility. Two lower grades, Cutter and Canner, are rarely if ever offered to customers as fresh beef but are used in the manufacture of various sausages, meat loaves and other processed meat items, which are not federally graded.

It does not necessarily follow that any one store would carry all the grades. The owner usually stocks the grade or grades that will satisfy the majority of his customers.

Beef of any of the grades described here will provide a satisfactory dish if appropriately prepared. The degree of quality which is associated with each of the grades is briefly discussed in the paragraphs that follow.



Prime beef is the top quality, produced from young and well-fed beef-type cattle. Meat from such animals has liberal quantities of fat interspersed within the lean (marbling) and is juicy, tender and flavorful. Prime rib roasts and loin steaks are consistently tender. You will find little Prime grade beef in retail markets because most of it is sold to hotels and restaurants.



Choice grade beef is of high quality but usually has less fat than Prime beef. Most of the high quality beef in retail markets is USDA Choice grade, and this is the grade most consumers prefer. More Choice beef is produced than any other grade, and it is usually available the year round in substantial quantity. Roasts and steaks from the loin and rib are tender and juicy and other cuts, such as those from the round or chuck, which are more suitable for braising and pot roasting, should be tender with a well-developed flavor.



USDA Good grade beef pleases thrifty shoppers who seek beef with little fat but of fairly good quality. Although cuts of this grade lack the juiciness associated with a higher degree of fatness, their relative tenderness and high proportion of lean to fat make them the preference of many people.



Beef of the USDA Standard grade has a very thin covering of fat and appeals to consumers whose primary concern is a high proportion of lean. It is mild in flavor and, though lacking the juiciness found in beef with more marbling, it is usually relatively tender when properly prepared.



Beef that is graded Commercial is produced from older cattle and usually lacks the tenderness of the higher grades. Most cuts require long slow cooking with moist heat to make them tender and to develop the rich, full beef flavor characteristic of mature beef.



USDA Utility grade beef is produced mostly from cattle somewhat advanced in age and is usually lacking in natural tenderness and juiciness. Cuts of this grade, as they appear in retail stores, carry very little fat but provide a palatable, economical source of lean meat for pot roasting, stewing, boiling or ground-meat dishes. For satisfactory results, long, slow cooking by moist heat is essential.

## Lamb, Yearling Mutton, and Mutton

Meat produced from sheep is divided into three classes according to its age when slaughtered—lamb, yearling mutton, and mutton.

The official grades for lamb and yearling mutton are USDA Prime, Choice, Good, Utility, and Cull.

The official grades for mutton are USDA Choice, Good, Utility, and Cull.

Lamb is much preferred to mutton by most Americans, and about 90 percent of the sheep produced are marketed as lambs. Lamb meat is usually light red, and fine in texture. Since lamb is produced from young animals, most of the cuts are sufficiently tender to be cooked by dry heat.



N-25236

Figure 1.—A Federal meat grader stamps the grade name—in this case USDA Choice—on the beef carcass with a roller which leaves a ribbon-like imprint. When the carcass is divided into retail cuts, the grade stamp will appear on most of these cuts. The stamping fluid is a harmless vegetable compound.

Roasting, broiling, and panbroiling are the usual methods of cooking.

Typical mutton is dark red in color and because it is produced from mature animals it may lack natural tenderness. Braising or pot roasting is the method generally used to develop tenderness and flavor.

The higher grades of both lamb and mutton are more tender and juicy and have a smaller percentage of bone than the lower grades.

## Veal and Calf

The official grades for veal and calf are USDA Prime, Choice, Good, Standard, Utility, and Cull.

Usually veal is produced from animals that are 3 months or less in age and which have subsisted largely on milk. The lean meat is grayish pink. The higher grades are more thickly fleshed than the lower grades which gives them a higher proportion of meat to bone. The higher grades also have more fat than the lower grades and thus are more juicy and flavorful. However, none of the grades has enough fat intermingled with the lean to make cooking by dry heat practical. Moist heat methods are needed to insure juiciness and development of flavor.

Usually calf is produced from animals between 3 and 8 months old, and which have subsisted partially or entirely on feeds other than milk for a substantial period of time. Calf is intermediate between veal and beef in its color, texture, flavor, tenderness, and juiciness. The small size of the cuts and their high proportion of lean to fat contribute greatly to the popularity of this kind of meat.

## Pork

No federally graded pork is available to consumers at the present time, although Federal grades have been published which are used by some States and by some individual buyers and sellers in grading live hogs or pork carcasses.

The official Federal grades for pork carcasses are U. S. No. 1, U. S. No. 2, U. S. No. 3, Medium, and Cull. These grades are based on differences in proportionate yields of lean and fat cuts and thus reflect the increasing consumer preference for leaner pork. However, if pork carcasses were marked with these grades in the same manner as beef carcasses, the marks would likely be removed in trimming and would not appear on the retail cuts.

## POULTRY

Poultry which has been graded for quality can be identified by the shield mark of the U. S. Department of Agriculture which shows the official grade. This grade mark may not be used unless the poultry has first been inspected for wholesomeness and has been processed in an approved plant under prescribed sanitary conditions.

Since January 1, 1959, Federal inspection has been compulsory for all poultry moving in interstate commerce. Other poultry may be inspected under a voluntary Federal program which has been in operation for the past 30



The inspection mark, a circle, may be used only on ready-to-cook poultry that has been examined by a Government inspector and passed as wholesome food. This mark denotes wholesomeness only—not grade (quality). It may be used without the grade mark.



The grade mark, a shield, tells the quality (U. S. Grade A, B, or C). Poultry may carry the grade mark only if it has been inspected for wholesomeness. The shopper who buys ready-to-cook poultry bearing this mark is assured of a high-quality, wholesome product.

Federal State Graded

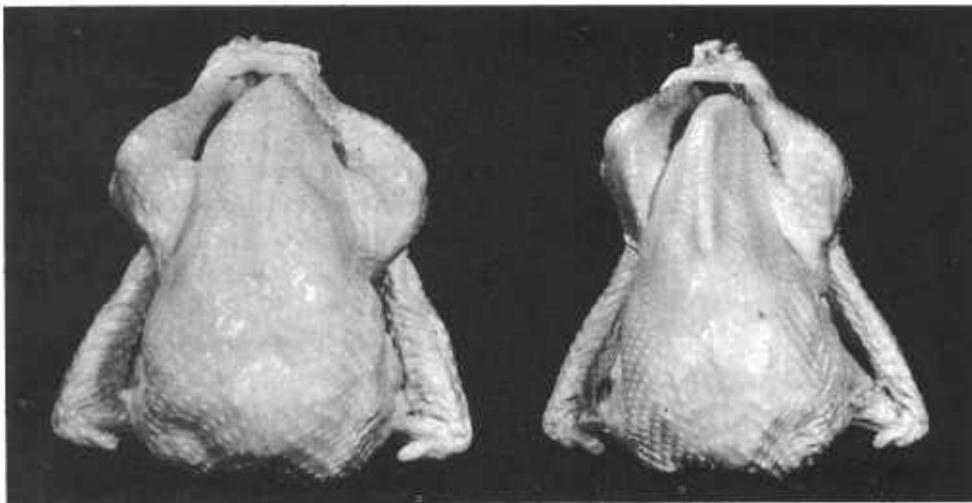
years. In either case, the processing plant using the inspection service must comply with the rigid regulations of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Poultry processed in such plants and identified with the inspection mark is eligible for Government grading. The identifying marks are illustrated below.

Most of the poultry that is inspected is also graded for quality. In judging quality, the grader takes note of the shape or conformation of the bird, the amount of fleshing or "meatiness," amount of fat distributed in and under the skin, and the absence or extent of bruises, tears, discolorations, and pinfeathers. Minimum standards for each of these factors have been set up for each of the three grades. Grades are applied to all kinds of domestic poultry, including chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, and squabs.

U. S. Grade A ready-to-cook poultry is the finest quality. Birds in this grade are of excellent table quality, have a high proportion of edible meat, are well processed, and have a pleasing appearance.

U. S. Grade B ready-to-cook poultry is of good table quality. As a rule, the birds are not so well-fleshed as those in Grade A or they may have some defects (cuts or tears, etc.) which affect their appearance.

U. S. Grade C ready-to-cook poultry includes birds that have relatively less meat in proportion to bone, or they may have more serious defects than those in Grade B.



BN-16968

Figure 2.—These young turkey carcasses illustrate (left to right) U. S. Grade A and U. S. Grade B.

## EGGS

You have undoubtedly seen graded eggs in your food store. The use of consumer grades for eggs has become quite extensive as a result of the enactment of laws by a number of States requiring that eggs be sold at retail on a graded basis. Many State Departments of Agriculture have adopted the Federal standards and grades. Some States have set up their own grading systems; in general, they follow the Federal standards rather closely.

Commercial plants that have their eggs graded under the Federal-State program are permitted to use the official grade mark designed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It is used, under the supervision of a licensed grader, on cartons that may also include the brand and firm names.



The official grade mark for eggs is in the form of a shield. It always carries the grade name (such as U. S. Grade A), the letters "USDA," and the words "Federal-State Graded" or a similar term.



The Fresh Fancy Quality grade shield identifies eggs produced and marketed under a quality-control program adopted by USDA in September 1959. The program requires special controls to assure freshness and high quality in eggs carrying this grade mark.

PRODUCED and MARKETING  
under FEDERAL-STATE  
QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAM

**Grades**—Fresh Fancy Quality, U. S. Grade AA, and U. S. Grade A eggs are of top quality. They have a large proportion of thick white which stands up well around a firm high yolk and they are delicate in flavor. These high-quality eggs are good for all uses, but you will find that their upstanding appearance and fine flavor make them especially appropriate for poaching, frying, and cooking in the shell.

Eggs of lower quality are good eggs, though they differ from higher quality eggs in several ways. Most of the white is thin and spreads over a wide area when broken. The yolk is rather flat, and may break easily.

Eggs of the lower qualities have dozens of uses in which appearance and delicate flavor are less important. They are good to use in baking, in thickening sauces and salad dressings, and combining with other foods such as tomatoes, cheese, or onions.

**Weights**—Six U. S. Weight Classes cover the full range of egg sizes. Only 4 of these 6 classes are likely to be found on the retail market—Extra Large, Large, Medium, and Small. The other two are Jumbo and Peewee. Each of these size names refers to a specific weight class, based on the total weight of a dozen eggs.

The grade letters (U. S. Grade A, etc.) indicate quality only. The weight class is stated separately and it indicates the weight of the dozen in ounces. Grade A eggs have the same quality whether they are small or large. The only difference is weight. Grade A eggs are not necessarily large; large eggs are not necessarily Grade A.

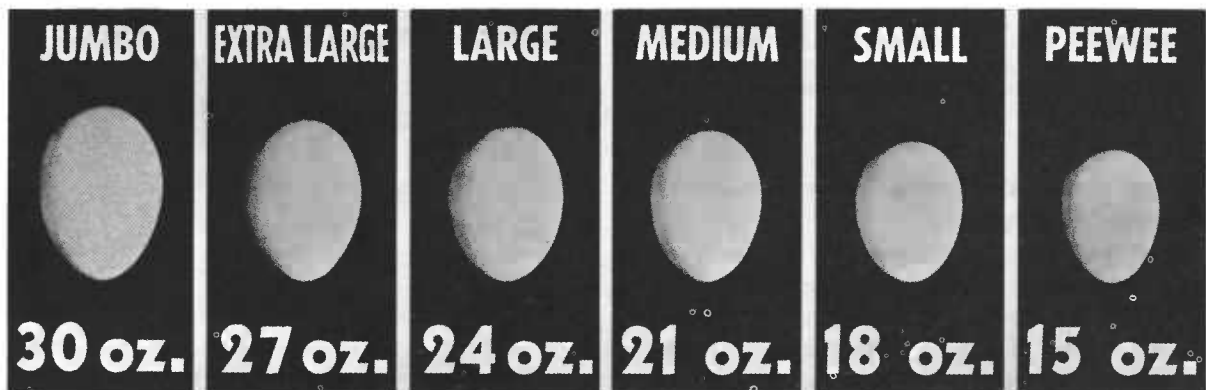


Figure 3.—These are the six U. S. Weight Classes for eggs, showing the minimum weight per dozen for each size.

BN-4299

## DAIRY PRODUCTS

Dairy products which you may find bearing U. S. grade designations include butter, cheese, and nonfat dry milk.

In addition, cottage cheese may carry a shield-shaped mark stating that it is "Quality Approved" by USDA. Rigid specifications have been set to cover its manufacture and quality. Several firms are now packaging and selling cottage cheese under the U. S. inspection emblem—which means that their operations are carried on under the supervision of a Federal inspector.



N-43615

Figure 4.—The "Quality Approved" USDA emblem appears here on the cover of a cottage cheese carton. It may also be printed on the sidewall of a carton. This emblem is the shopper's assurance that the product has been manufactured under quality control service.

### Butter

Butter is the dairy product most widely sold on the basis of U. S. grades.

When you see the letters "U. S." before the grade mark on a butter carton or wrapper, you know that the butter has been graded by an authorized grader of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, at the request of the manufacturer or dealer.

When you see the letters AA, A, B, or numerical Score 93, 92, or 90, on the package without the prefix "U. S." the butter has not been certified by a Federal butter grader.

Some States have enacted laws requiring that butter be grade labeled and in these localities the letters or grade names on butter cartons denote State standards, applied by State graders. Such State grades do not carry the prefix "U. S." but may show the State name or seal.

A grade mark on the package without the prefix "U. S." or State identification reflects the manufacturer's or distributor's own standard of quality. This butter may be of good quality but since it is not federally graded the consumer must necessarily rely on the distributor's statement that it meets the quality designation on the package.

U. S. grades for butter include U. S. Grade AA (U. S. 93 score), U. S. Grade A (U. S. 92 score), and U. S. Grade B (U. S. 90 score). "Score" refers to the total number of points allotted a sample on the basis of the quality of several factors, chiefly flavor, but also including body, texture, color and salt.

To be rated U. S. Grade AA, butter must have a fine, highly pleasing aroma and a delicate sweet



N-43614

Figure 5.—The U. S. grade designation is plainly marked on these butter cartons. It may also be found on paper wrappers of pound, half-pound or quarter-pound prints.



flavor. It is made from high quality fresh sweet cream.

U. S. Grade A butter must have a pleasing and desirable flavor and it is made only from cream that has such flavor. Although it rates second to the top grade, it will please even discriminating consumers.

U. S. Grade B butter is generally manufactured from selected sour cream and is readily acceptable to many consumers though it lacks the fine fresh flavor of the top two grades.

## Cheese

Official grades for Cheddar cheese and Swiss cheese have been in use for many years by industry in commercial trading. Until recently, however, there was only limited use of grade designations for consumer-packaged Cheddar cheese. USDA has now granted the use of the U. S. Grade AA official grade mark on consumer packages.

Flavor of Cheddar cheese, an important index to quality, has in the past been very difficult for the average consumer to judge. The new USDA grade mark offers a valuable guide to dependable, uniform flavor and quality in Cheddar cheese.



N-42100

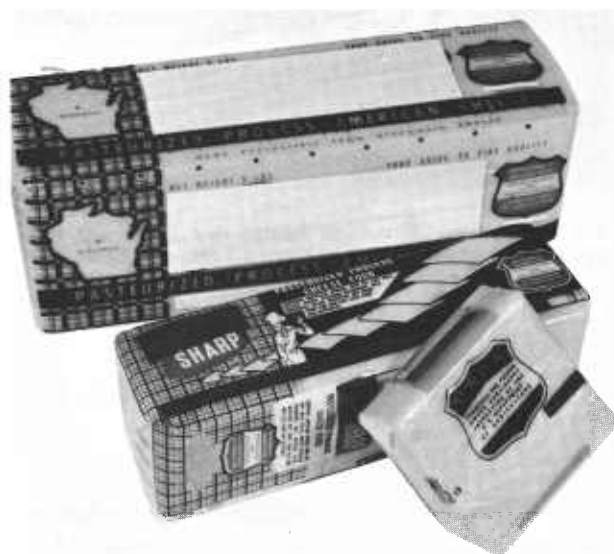
Figure 6.—This natural cheese has been graded and packed under the supervision of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, as the shopper can see from the emblem and printing on the label. Natural cheese is packaged and marked according to its curing or aging.

Other grades for Cheddar include U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B, U. S. Grade C, and U. S. Grade D.

Grading is based on the factors of flavor, body, and texture. Swiss cheese is also rated on "eye" formation.

All official USDA grading of cheese is done by inspectors licensed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Approved plants using grading service must operate under regulations and the rules for sanitation and packing specified by the Department.

Although no U. S. grades have been established for process cheese and cheese foods, appreciable quantities are being processed under Federal inspection, in accordance with specifications prepared by the Department of Agriculture. These products are also marked with the official inspection shield.



N-19822

Figure 7.—The official USDA inspection emblem can be seen on these packages of process cheese. Shown here are a five-pound loaf of pasteurized process American cheese, a two-pound loaf of pasteurized cheese food, and a half-pound package of process cheese slices.

tion shield. Processing procedures, including careful grading of the natural cheese and examination of the other ingredients used in the manufacture of process cheese, are under the inspection of a Federal grader.

As in the case of butter, the official grade shield or inspection mark on cheese assures the customer of a dependable, uniform quality product.

## Nonfat Dry Milk

You may be one of the millions of Americans now buying nonfat dry milk to use as a beverage or in cooking. Its low cost, its keeping quality and its ready availability make dry milk popular with many people. Since the introduction of "instant" nonfat dry milk—a form which mixes quickly and easily with water—there has been an even greater demand for this product.

U. S. grades have been established for nonfat dry milk for many years but have been used mainly for commercial trading. Increased use of reconstituted nonfat dry milk as a beverage is accompanied by keen interest on the part of some consumers in the quality of this milk. Consequently some distributors have expressed interest in making available to consumers nonfat dry milk which has been manufactured and packed under USDA inspection. At present only a limited amount of nonfat dry milk is being packed and labeled with USDA grade labels.

The appearance of the official emblem on a package of nonfat dry milk, as on the other products mentioned, will assure the customer of dependable quality and compliance with sanitary requirements.



N-43616

Figure 8.—This carton of nonfat dry milk, which will make eight quarts of reconstituted milk, has been graded U. S. Extra Grade.

## FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Most fresh fruits and vegetables are packed and sold on the wholesale market on the basis of U. S. grades.

There are 84 standards, for 73 different fruits and vegetables, provided for use of growers and shippers at the wholesale level and 13 "consumer standards" developed for use at the retail level.

Wholesale grades are designated numerically, in most cases, as U. S. No. 1, U. S. No. 2, etc. These grades vary somewhat from product to product. For instance, the top grade for apples is U. S. Extra Fancy, the next best is U. S. Fancy, followed by U. S. No. 1 and several other grades. U. S. Fancy is the top grade for potatoes, with U. S. No. 1 as the second best and U. S. Commercial as the third grade. The top grade for many other fresh fruits and vegetables, however, is U. S. No. 1.

These grade names would not be of concern to most food shoppers except for the fact that you often will see small consumer-sized packages of apples, or potatoes, marked with the wholesale grade. As you can see, from the list of grades given above, the top wholesale grades for these two products are U. S. Extra Fancy and U. S. Fancy, *not* U. S. No. 1 as you might think.

Consumer standards use alphabetical designations for grade names. U. S. Grade A and U. S. Grade B potatoes are further divided, in consumer standards, on the basis of size. There are 8 of these designations: U. S. Grade A—Small; U. S. Grade A—Medium; U. S. Grade A—Medium to Large; U. S. Grade A—Large; and the same range of sizes in Grade B.

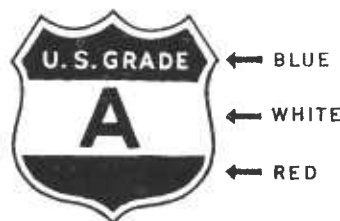
Grades for fresh fruits and vegetables are determined on the basis of the product's color, size, shape, degree of maturity and freedom from defects. Defects may be caused by dirt, freezing, disease, insects, mechanical injury, or other means.

There is no marked difference in the nutritional value of a first grade fruit or vegetable and a second grade product. The difference is mainly in appearance, waste, and preference.



In general, the grade factors for U. S. No. 1 (or other top grade) in the wholesale standards are comparable to those for U. S. Consumer Grade A, but the requirements for the top consumer grade are made stricter by reducing the allowance for defective specimens and raising the requirements for cleanness and some other factors.

Consumer standards have been issued for beet greens, broccoli (Italian sprouting), brussels sprouts, carrots, celery, corn (husked, on the cob), cranberries, kale, parsnips, potatoes, spinach leaves, tomatoes, and turnips. However, there is very little consumer grade-marked produce available in retail stores.



There are many problems connected with applying consumer grades to fresh fruits and vegetables. The perishable nature of the commodity is the most severely limiting factor. A package of fresh tomatoes, for instance, might meet the requirements for a certain consumer grade at the time it is packed, but by the time it reaches the store counter, the product may have deteriorated to the point that it will no longer measure up to the standard.

The phenomenal growth in recent years of the prepackaging industry may provide a way to make the use of consumer grades more practical. Some of this prepackaging is done in terminal markets, making it possible to offer produce for sale in retail stores the day after it was packaged. Such quickly marketed produce would not be likely to fall below the grade marked on the package.

Even though you may not be able to buy fresh fruits and vegetables marked with consumer grades, the widespread use of wholesale grades does work to your advantage. Today you generally are getting much better fresh fruits and vegetables than were available in stores in years past. This is possible because of better grading of these products, faster transportation, better refrigeration, and improved packaging.

N-20951  
Figure 9.—A shopper buys consumer graded potatoes. These 10-pound packages are marked U. S. Grade A Medium to Large.



## PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

(and related products)

Grades have been developed for a wide variety of processed fruits and vegetables—canned, dried, and frozen—and a number of related products such as peanut butter, jams, jellies, pickles, olives, honey, and dehydrated orange juice.

The grade names U. S. Grade A or U. S. Fancy, U. S. Grade B or U. S. Choice or U. S. Extra Standard, and U. S. Grade C or U. S. Standard, are used for most of these products, although there are a few exceptions. For a very few products, the grade names deviate slightly from this pattern to conform to commercial practices of long-standing. But for most of this group of processed foods, the letter grades A, B, and C apply.

In general, Grade A (or Fancy) represents an excellent quality in processed fruits or vegetables. Grade A products are very uniform in size and color, are practically free from blemishes, and are

the proper degree of maturity or tenderness. This quality is most suited for special uses, as in desserts or salads, when appearance and texture are of prime importance.

Grade B (or, usually, Choice for fruits, Extra Standard for vegetables) is a good quality and a high proportion of processed fruits and vegetables are of this grade. Such products may not be as uniform in size and color or as tender or free from blemishes as Grade A products. This grade may be termed a general-utility grade and is quite satisfactory for most uses.

Grade C (or Standard) processed fruits and vegetables are a fairly good quality. They are just as wholesome and may be as nutritious as higher grades and they have a definite value as a thrifty buy for use in dishes where appearance or tenderness are not too important.



Figure 10.—USDA graded foods, such as these canned items, permit the shopper to pick the quality he wants. Descriptive labeling, such as that on the fruit cocktail, tells the shopper the style of the product and the quantity.

N-20866

The Department inspects and certifies these products as to quality and condition upon requests of processors, buyers, Federal and State purchasing departments, or other interested parties. These applicants pay the cost of inspection.

Some canners, freezers, and distributors use grade designations on their labels. Labels may also carry additional information descriptive of the product, such as the number of halves in canned peaches or pears, the sieve size of peas, strength of sirup in canned fruits, sweeteners in frozen fruits, number of servings, cooking instructions for frozen vegetables, or special statements for dietetic foods.

Any processor or distributor may use the terms "Grade A," "Grade B," or "Grade C" on labels to describe the quality of his products, whether or not they have been inspected. However, products thus labeled must meet the specifications of the Department's standards for the grade claimed; otherwise the products may be considered as mislabeled.

Some processing plants are operating voluntarily under continuous inspection—a service offered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture at a nominal fee to packers. These plants have been carefully selected and thoroughly inspected to make sure that they meet strict sanitary requirements. Processors who operate their plants under USDA continuous inspection, or distributors who buy from these plants, may use the prefix "U. S." before the

grade designation (such as U. S. Grade A) on their label, as well as the statement "Packed under continuous inspection of the U. S. Department of Agriculture."



N-20867

Figure 11.—These frozen vegetables have been graded U. S. Grade A and have been packed under the continuous inspection of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Only fruits and vegetables packed under USDA continuous inspection may be marked with the U. S. grade.

## DRY BEANS AND PEAS

The U. S. standards for dry edible beans, peas, and lentils are widely used by the trade, but the grades rarely appear on consumer packages.

Grades for beans, peas, and lentils are based on such factors as color and presence or absence of defects, foreign material, and beans, peas, or lentils of other classes. Defects may be those caused by weather, disease, insects, or mechanical means.






There are special "Handpicked" grades for beans which are well adapted for consumer sales. The top grade is U. S. Choice Handpicked, followed by U. S. No. 1 Handpicked, U. S. No. 2 Handpicked, and U. S. No. 3 Handpicked. In other than the handpicked grades, grades for beans are simply numerical. Grades for dry peas, split peas, and lentils, are also numerical.

## RICE

There are Federal grades for both milled (white) and brown rice. Retail packages sometimes carry these grades. For milled rice there are six numerical grades, but usually only grades U. S. No. 1 and U. S. No. 2 are used in the retail trade. There are five numerical grades for brown rice.

The grades are based on such factors as the presence or absence of defective kernels (broken kernels or those damaged by heat, water, or insects); mixed varieties (which may affect cooking qualities); and objectionable foreign material. General appearance and color are also considered in grading milled rice.

## U. S. GRADES AT A GLANCE

	Product	1st Grade	2d Grade	3d Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
<b>MEATS</b> 	Beef	USDA Prime	USDA Choice	USDA Good	USDA Standard	USDA Commercial <sup>1</sup>
	Veal	USDA Prime	USDA Choice	USDA Good	USDA Standard	USDA Utility <sup>2</sup>
	Calf	USDA Prime	USDA Choice	USDA Good	USDA Standard	USDA Utility <sup>2</sup>
	Lamb	USDA Prime	USDA Choice	USDA Good	USDA Utility	USDA Cull
	Yearling Mutton	USDA Prime	USDA Choice	USDA Good	USDA Utility	USDA Cull
	Mutton	.....	USDA Choice	USDA Good	USDA Utility	USDA Cull
<b>DAIRY PRODUCTS</b> 	Butter	U. S. Grade AA (U. S. 93 Score)	U. S. Grade A (U. S. 92 Score)	U. S. Grade B (U. S. 90 Score)	.....	.....
	Cheddar Cheese	U. S. Grade AA	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Grade C	.....
	Swiss Cheese	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Grade C	U. S. Grade D	.....
	Nonfat Dry Milk	U. S. Extra Grade	U. S. Standard Grade	.....	.....	.....
	Cottage Cheese	No Grades—May be marked USDA "Quality Approved"				
<b>POULTRY &amp; EGGS</b> 	Poultry	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Grade C	.....	.....
	Eggs	Fresh Fancy Quality U. S. Grade AA	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	.....	.....
<b>RICE, BEANS, PEAS, AND LENTILS</b> 	Lentils	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....	.....	.....
	Milled Rice	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	U. S. No. 3	U. S. No. 4	U. S. No. 5
	Brown Rice	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	U. S. No. 3	U. S. No. 4	.....
	Dry Beans	U. S. Choice Handpicked U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 1 Handpicked U. S. No. 2	U. S. No. 2 Handpicked U. S. No. 3	U. S. No. 3 Handpicked	.....
	Dry Peas	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	U. S. No. 3	.....	.....
	Split Peas	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	U. S. No. 3	.....	.....
<b>PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES</b> 	(and related products) <sup>3</sup>	U. S. Grade A (Fancy)	U. S. Grade B (Choice or Ex. Std.)	U. S. Grade C (Standard)	.....	.....

<sup>1</sup> Three lowest grades are USDA Utility, Cutter, and Canner.

<sup>2</sup> Lowest grade is USDA Cull.

<sup>3</sup> Grades used for these products are usually as listed here, but there are some exceptions.

# U. S. GRADES AT A GLANCE

FRESH  
FRUITS  
AND  
VEGETA-  
BLES



Product	Consumer Grades		Wholesale Grades *			
	1st Grade	2d Grade	1st Grade	2d Grade	3d Grade	4th Grade
Beet Greens	U. S. Grade A	.....	U. S. No. 1	.....	.....	.....
Potatoes	U. S. Grade A Large U. S. Grade A Medium to Large U. S. Grade A Medium U. S. Grade A Small	U. S. Grade B Large U. S. Grade B Medium to Large U. S. Grade B Medium U. S. Grade B Small	U. S. Fancy	U. S. No. 1	U. S. Com- mercial	U. S. No. 2
Broccoli (Italian Sprout- ing)	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Fancy	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....
Brussels Sprouts	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....	.....
Carrots	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	(Topped carrots) U. S. Extra No. 1	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....
Corn (Husked, on the cob)	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	(Green corn) U. S. Fancy	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....
Cranberries	U. S. Grade A	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Kale	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. No. 1	U. S. Com- mercial	.....	.....
Parsnips	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....	.....
Spinach Leaves	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Extra No. 1	U. S. No. 1	U. S. Com- mercial	.....
Tomatoes	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	U. S. No. 1	U. S. Combina- tion	U. S. No. 2	U. S. No. 3
Turnips	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade B	(Topped turnips) U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....	.....
Celery	U. S. Grade AA	U. S. Grade A (3d Grade— U. S. Grade B)	U. S. Extra No. 1	U. S. No. 1	U. S. No. 2	.....
Apples	None	None	U. S. Extra Fancy	U. S. Fancy	U. S. No. 1 U. S. No. 1 <sup>1</sup> Cookers U. S. No. 1 <sup>2</sup> Early U. S. Hail Grade <sup>3</sup>	U. S. Utility

<sup>1</sup> Same as U. S. No. 1 except for color.

<sup>2</sup> Same as U. S. No. 1 except for color, maturity and size.

<sup>3</sup> Same as U. S. No. 1 except for hail injury.

\* Partial listing of commodities for which there are wholesale grades to show how these grades compare with consumer grades.

## PUBLICATIONS

Information compiled in this publication was developed by the Livestock, Poultry, Dairy, Fruit and Vegetable, and Grain Divisions of the Agricultural Marketing Service. These divisions have issued other publications which provide further and more detailed information on the subjects covered.

A list of some of these publications, along with a brief description of each, is printed below. Single copies of any of them may be obtained free by writing the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., and requesting the ones you want. Be sure to list the serial numbers, if any, of the publications desired.

**Beef Chart (8 x 10½ in.)**—Shows wholesale and retail cuts of beef.

**Check List of U. S. Standards for Farm Products (AMS-210)**—Lists all of the 361 U. S. Standards for farm products in effect (both wholesale and consumer standards). Tells how copies of any of these standards for grades may be obtained.

**Cheese Buying Guide for Consumers (MB-17)**—Offers information for menu planners and shoppers on the major cheese varieties. Serves as a guide in making the best selections to suit particular needs.

**How to Buy Eggs by USDA Grades and Weight Classes (L-442)**—Illustrates USDA grade marks for eggs, describes and illustrates quality grades and weight classes, gives tips on buying, storing, and using eggs.

**How to Buy Poultry by USDA Grades (MB-1)**—Describes and illustrates USDA grades for poultry, gives information on buying and using poultry, including the different classes.

**Know the Eggs You Buy (PA-70) Chart (12 x 17 in.)**—Shows in color the appearance of various grades of eggs, broken out of the shell, fried, and poached; gives weight classes and weight per dozen.

**Know Your Butter Grades (MB-12)**—Describes butter grades, explains their meaning, and tells how to protect butter quality.

**Lamb Chart (8 x 10½ in.)**—Shows wholesale and retail cuts of lamb.

**Processed Fruit and Vegetable Inspection At Your Service (AMS-484)**—Describes USDA inspection services for processed fruits and vegetables, and illustrates the shields used on such foods.

**Standardization and Inspection of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (MP-604)**—Describes development of standards, how they are applied, and inspection service for fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Turkey on the Table the Year Round (G-45)**—Gives suggestions on buying turkey; classifies sizes and breeds; gives instructions for buying, preparing, and cooking; recipes.

**USDA Poultry Inspection, A Consumer's Safeguard (PA-299)**—Gives tips on buying and using poultry; describes USDA inspection marks, their importance, where to find them.

**U. S. Grades for Beef (MB-15)**—Describes and illustrates grades and cuts of beef. Contains chart of wholesale and retail beef cuts and a cooking guide showing appropriate cooking methods for each cut of beef in each grade.

**Veal Chart (8 x 10½ in.)**—Shows wholesale and retail cuts of veal.